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THE IDENTITY CRISIS: ITS  
RELATIONSHIP TO SELF PERCEPTION

BY



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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
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## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine the concept of the identity crisis and its relationship to self-perception and more specifically, to determine what aspects of the self are associated with entering the adolescent era. The aim of this study was to determine if the adolescent's theory of development provided the theoretical basis for the identity crisis and to determine if the adolescent's theory of development provided a basis for understanding the adolescent's self-perception. The study was designed to determine if the adolescent's theory of development provided a basis for understanding the adolescent's self-perception. The study was designed to determine if the adolescent's theory of development provided a basis for understanding the adolescent's self-perception.

Aspects of the identity crisis were examined in terms of Erikson's categorization of identity status -- identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion -- and the relationship between degree of resolution of the identity crisis. Parents' identity status interviews and the extent of involvement for identity status. For the measurement of self-perception, Erikson's Identity Status Scale was chosen. The study aimed to determine if the adolescent's theory of development provided a basis for understanding the adolescent's self-perception. The study was designed to determine if the adolescent's theory of development provided a basis for understanding the adolescent's self-perception.

The general hypothesis that differences in resolution of the identity crisis would be reflected in differences in self-perception, was not supported in the present research. Because of the complexity and complexity of these two constructs in psychology, further exploration in subsequent studies was recommended.







## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine the concept of the identity crisis and its relationship to self perception and more specifically, to determine what dimensions of the self are associated with outcomes of the identity crisis. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development provided the theoretical bases for the identity crisis, described as a period of psychosocial upheaval, that is believed to involve a restructuring and redefinition of the self. Thus the aim of this thesis was a contribute to the understanding of these two complex psychological constructs, the identity crisis and self perception, that are central to human development.

Outcomes of the identity crisis were understood in terms of Marcia's categorization of identity statuses -- Identity Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Identity Diffusion -- that operationalize degrees of resolution of the identity crisis. Marcia's Identity status Interview was the means of assessment for identity status. For the measurement of self perception, Fitts' Tennessee Self Concept Scale was chosen, the scale based on a two dimensional concept of self, external and internal. Participants in the study were volunteer, male undergraduate students.

The general hypothesis, that differences in resolution of the identity crisis would be reflected in differences in self perception, was not supported in the present research. Because of the complexity and centrality of these two constructs in psychology, further exploration to substantiate findings was recommended.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is one of the most crucial stages of human psychological development. Adolescence is a time of change when the cumulated experience of the earlier years of childhood is interpreted and reorganized into the foundations of an adult personality. Ausubel (1954), for example, envisioned adolescence as a "time of extensive personality re-organization ... It (adolescence) implies a more explicit assessment of the component contributions that various biological and social factors make in effecting a transition from childhood to adult personality status" (p. 23). The process of assessment contributes to the individual's perception of his self and his relationship to the wider community. Any psychology that tries to understand and explain adolescence must provide an explanation for continuity within change; the contribution of the past to the present; the contribution of the past to the future; and the perceptions of the individual during such a period of change. Adolescence, however, is not a time of life that lends itself easily to empirical study. The demarcation of adolescence from other periods of life is quite arbitrary; nevertheless, adolescence can be defined as a distinct period of life. The beginning of adolescence is usually marked by biological change whereas the end of the period is generally determined by psychological criteria or conditions.

Theoretical approaches conceptualize adolescence as one of many stages of human development. Writers on adolescence psychology concur on characteristics of the stage, the importance of peer group association, biological change, sexual adjustment, cognitive and moral growth





and increased independence from the family (Havighurst, 1952; Hurlock, 1967; Jersild, 1957; Mussen et al., 1969; Stone and Church, 1973). The predominant psychological developmental task of adolescence is that of the individual attempting to find "an identity, a sense of self in relation to the world at large" (Stone and Church, 1973, p. 460). It is this psychological task -- "finding an identity" -- that is the concern of this thesis.

Erik H. Erikson (1950, 1959a, b, 1964, 1968) upon whose work this thesis is based, has contributed substantially to the understanding of the adolescent self. His theory, derived from a psychoanalytic and developmental point of view, postulates a number of identifiable stages through which individuals pass. Identity formation is a central process in these stages of development. According to Erikson, the establishment of an identity is most crucial to the stage of adolescence. Erikson described adolescence as a period of the identity crisis, in which the individual restructures his self concept. The identity crisis is characteristically experienced as a time of ambivalence, contradiction, inner struggle, and vacillation between childhood and adulthood. It is a period of redefinition of the self that results from the integration of roles and images accumulated throughout earlier childhood years. The theoretical construct of an identity crisis is supported in literature on the self and identity (Douvan and Adelson, 1966; Gold and Douvan, 1969; Levita, 1965; Mussen et al., 1969; Weiner, 1970) and has received considerable empirical support (Bronson, 1959; Constaniople, 1969; Donovan, 1975a; Dignan, 1965; Marcia, 1966, 1967; Waterman et al., 1974).



## Purpose

The purpose of this study was two fold. First, study was made of Erikson's concept of the identity crisis and its relationship to self perception. Secondly, the study attempted to identify specific dimensions of the self that were associated with degrees of resolution of the identity crisis.

The overall intent of the thesis was to contribute to the understanding of identity formation by studying the relationship between the psychological constructs of identity crisis and self perception. One hypothesis of this thesis was that the identity crisis is marked by measurable shifts in self perception, that in turn affect behavior as the identity crisis moves towards its resolution.

The subject of the thesis was chosen because of the centrality of questions of identity and self perception to the field of individual psychology and more specifically to the counselling process. Self perception and the manner in which it develops as an outcome of the identity crisis, or in the absence of an identifiable period of crisis, influences individual behavior. A satisfactory measure of self perception and of the individual's sense of identity may be an invaluable tool for the counsellor. This study attempts to assess the validity of some measures of self perception and identity that are currently in use.

## Definition of Terms

Personal identity describes, in psychological terms, the sense of feeling unified, whole and continuous; the individual experiences continuity within his self. A personal identity implies a sense of knowing who one is; "something in the individual which causes him to remain the same, to his sameness and continuity" (Levita, 1965, p. 129).





Self perception refers to an awareness of various aspects of the self as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965).

Identification refers to the process of adopting the qualities and characteristics of another individual.

Identity crisis is a concept developed by Erik H. Erikson (1959 a, b) that describes various intensified psychosocial upheaval. This crisis is considered normative to late adolescence and serves as a transition period from childhood to adulthood. It is a time of ambivalence and confusion where self-definition is arrived at through role experimentation, assessment, re-evaluation and decision. The positive outcome is the establishment of a dominant positive ego identity.

Ego is not a central construct to the present study but defined here because reference is made to it in later quotations. Ego is a central concept of personality used in psychoanalytic theory. The ego functions as the chief executive responsible for the integration of one's personal identity as it develops throughout life. The difficulty with the concept, as stated in this way, is that it suggests a personality within a personality. One can question, though, whether the boundaries of the ego include all of the personality, or are parts of the central, guiding and integrating force or entity within the personality as a whole. Ego, as used in the quotations cited in this thesis, is used in the latter sense.

Resolution of the identity crisis refers to the possible outcomes of the identity crisis with the positive outcome being the achievement of ego identity and the negative outcome being identity diffusion.

Ego identity, according to Erikson, is a "total integration of vocational ambition and aspirations, along with all those qualities



acquired through earlier identification" (Muuss, 1968, p. 52). A sense of psychosocial well being is associated with the achievement of ego identity.

Ego identity status is a construct developed by Marcia (1964) that operationally defines outcomes of the identity crisis. Four ego identity statuses are differentiated with each status representing a degree of resolution of the identity crisis. These statuses are discussed in Chapter II.

Psychosocial is a descriptive term referring to the influence on behavior of social conditions within a particular cultural environment.

### Assumptions

This thesis is based on several assumptions. First, human life is a developmental process with definable stages. Adolescence is one stage of development. Second, each stage of human development influences the way in which the individual perceives his self. Third, the individual's perception of his self influences his behavior. Fourth, the way in which the individual perceives his self can be measured. Fifth, based on the assessment of one's self perception, it is possible to predict how the individual's behavior will be influenced.

### Overview

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the relationship between the identity crisis and self perception. In Chapter I an introduction to the study, its purposes, and the theoretical assumptions that form the basis of the research are presented. In Chapter II the theoretical bases of the study are discussed, focussing on Erikson's (1950) theory of psychosocial development. The main theoretical concept analyzed



is the identity crisis and its positive outcome, the achievement of ego identity. Outcomes of the identity crisis are discussed with reference to ego identity statuses (Marcia, 1964). Related literature is reviewed and an operational definition for self perception is developed. In Chapter III an outline is provided for the research methodology used in this investigation; sample selection, experimental procedures and statistical analyses are discussed. The test instruments, Marcia's Identity Status Interview (Marcia, 1964) and the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) are described as is the rationale for their selection. In Chapter IV the results of the research are reported and interpreted. Chapter V provides a summary and discussion of the research results. Limitations of the study are discussed and possible areas for further research are suggested.





## CHAPTER II

### THEORY AND RELATED RESEARCH

This chapter presents the theoretical bases of this thesis founded on Erikson's (1959, 1959a, 1964, 1968) theory of ego development. Erikson's (1950) stages of human development are introduced and emphasis is placed on the concept of the identity crisis as it occurs in the stage of adolescence. Central to this discussion is the acquisition of ego identity which Erikson believes is necessary for successful resolution of the identity crisis. Resolution of the identity crisis is explored in terms of ego identity status, a construct developed by Marcia (1964, 1966, 1968). Research on Erikson's concept of ego identity including several empirical studies conducted on ego identity status is reviewed. To complete the outline of the theoretical bases, Fitts' (1965, 1971, 1972) concept of self is developed as it relates to the study of self perception and the identity crisis.

#### Erikson's Developmental Approach

Erikson's theory of development describes human psychosocial development through eight stages which comprise a complete life cycle. Inherent in his theory is an historical perspective of human development, the wider community and its culture. For Erikson the predominant theme in human development is the establishment of an identity, "A sense of psychosocial well being ... a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of knowing where one is going; and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count" (Erikson, 1968, p. 165). Identity is formed through the process of ego development. In this process, the ego's function is:



to integrate the psychosexual and psychosocial aspects of a given level of development and at the same time to integrate the relation of newly added identity elements already in existence -- that is, to bridge the inescapable discontinuities between different levels of personality development.  
(Erikson, 1968, p. 162)

For Erikson, human psychological growth proceeds along a continuum divided into stages, each of which is characterized by a polar task. Each polar task requires successful resolution for ego growth. For example, the polar task for the first stage of development, Infancy, is trust vs. mistrust. Successful resolution or reconciliation of this task depends on the infant experiencing a higher proportion of experiences of 'trust' as compared to 'mistrust'. Hence both a sense of 'trust' and 'mistrust' emerges and in the healthy personality the dominant experiences are 'trust'. The polar task, although stated in extreme by Erikson, represents a continuum of experiences.

During each stage of development a crisis occurs, when growth either takes place or is retarded. Erikson refers to this crisis as a psychosocial crisis that is crucial to the resolution of the polar tasks. This crisis period determines the dominant outcome of the stage to be established, whether positive, for example a sense of 'trust', or negative, for example a sense of 'mistrust'.

Underlying the theory is the principle of epigenetic development as illustrated in his epigenetic chart (see Figure 1, page 12). Each stage of development is understood as it contributes to later stages while it simultaneously 'ensembles' preceding ones.

Erikson proposes four stages of childhood: Infancy, Early Childhood, Play Age and School Age. In Infancy, the psychosocial crisis



of trust vs. mistrust preoccupies the child's first year of life.

Erikson believes it is the task of the culture to instill in the child a sense of basic trust, "an essential trustfulness of others as well as a fundamental sense of one's own trustworthiness" (1968, p. 92).

The virtue Hope is established during this stage.

The second stage, Early Childhood, centers on the crisis of autonomy vs. shame and doubt. The child of 2 to 3 years experiences a recurring battle of whether to "hold on" or "let go". He is in a struggle illustrated in numerous seemingly contradictory situations, for example, when a child has the tendency to both demand and push away a parent's affection or possess and discard a toy. Developed in this stage is the virtue Will.

Play Age, from age 3 to 5, is the third stage of childhood. The developmental task is initiative vs. guilt with the positive outcome being a sense of initiative and ambition. As well, a conscience is developed. During this stage the child's locomotor and language skills greatly increase and his imagination expands. The virtue Purpose is developed during this period.

The next stage of childhood is the School Age where the child learns to produce things and receives pleasure as well as recognition from these activities. The developmental task is industry vs. inferiority, industry referring to being "industrious". Usually this stage begins at ages 5 to 6 when the child finds himself in a school setting. The virtue Competence is established during this stage.

Following childhood is the stage of Adolescence which Erikson regarded as the last stage of childhood. This stage is responsible for the establishment of a dominant positive identity or 'ego identity'





following the resolution of the task identity vs. identity diffusion. The virtue developed during Adolescence is Fidelity. As the concern of this thesis is the identity crisis, more detail is given to the period of late adolescence in the next section of this chapter.

The last three stages, Young Adult, Adulthood, and Mature Age, are stages of adulthood. During the stage of Young Adult the focus is on the formation of intimate interpersonal relationships. Growth during this stage determines whether one is able to establish intimate relationships where sexual intimacy is only one aspect of the relationships, or whether one forms stereotyped relationships that may lead to isolation or self-absorption. The developmental task is intimacy vs. isolation. Love is the respective virtue.

In the seventh stage of development, Adulthood, the task is generativity vs. self-absorption. The positive outcome of the stage is generativity, referring to a concern for the next generation, the establishment and the guiding of the next generation. The negative outcome is stagnation as exemplified by impoverished interpersonal relationships and boredom. The virtue is Care.

The last stage, completing the life cycle, is the Mature Age and involves the resolution of the task ego integrity vs. disgust and despair. For Erikson, this stage "serves the need for that integrated heritage which gives indispensable perspective to the life cycle" (1968, p. 40). Wisdom is the developed virtue.

In conclusion, Erikson's basic theoretical concepts have been briefly reviewed to provide a foundation for the empirical study of the identity crisis in late adolescence. The primary focus of the thesis is Erikson's theoretical concept of ego identity as it is



related to the identity crisis.

### The Identity Crisis in Late Adolescence

Identity formation is a crucial issue in Erikson's theory. It occurs throughout life, from Infancy through Maturity. According to Erikson, however, the most critical period in the establishment of a dominant positive identity is the stage of adolescence. The psychosocial crisis encountered is identity vs. identity diffusion. Erikson termed this crisis the 'identity crisis'. The actual 'identity crisis' is more likely to occur in late adolescence and may even be prolonged into the stage of young adulthood. According to Erikson, the identity crisis:

is characterized by an enormous spurt of new needs, new energies, and new faculties, and therefore receives special treatment by societies and cultures; for before the young person enters adulthood, he must be sure to put his new needs, energies, and faculties at the disposal of his society's values (1959b, p. 74).

The positive outcome of the identity crisis is ego identity, that is "the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (Erikson, 1959a, p. 89). For the purposes of this thesis, the negative outcome of the crisis is referred to as identity diffusion. Other terms used by Erikson to describe the unsuccessful resolution of the identity crisis are role confusion (1950) and identity confusion (1968). Erikson points out that the state of identity diffusion is primarily characterized by an inability to settle on an occupational choice. Simply stated, there is no commitment to an occupation. At the same time, commitment is lacking in other areas









being demanded by society: physical intimacy, competition, and psychosocial self-definition. A state of psychosocial confusion results.

The stage of adolescence may be viewed as a state of 'psychosocial moratorium' where a delay of commitment is sanctioned by society.

Erikson writes:

The adolescent mind is essentially a mind of the moratorium, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed (1963, p. 262-263).

Further, the stage is a

psychosocial moratorium during which the individual through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of society, to be uniquely made for him ....the young adult gains an assured sense of inner continuity and social sameness which will bridge what he 'was' as a child and he is 'about to become' and will reconcile 'his conception of himself' and his 'community's recognition' of him (Erikson, 1959a, p. 111).

For Erikson, commitment to an occupation is a necessary condition for the achievement of ego identity. Another commitment that is essential for healthy development in later stages is commitment to an ideology. By this Erikson means commitment to a "way of life", to some system of principles and ideals. He suggests that a lack of ideological commitment results in a confusion of values which may be dangerous to youth and on a broader perspective, dangerous to society.

In adolescence the stated psychosocial crisis is identity vs. identity diffusion with the 'identity crisis' usually occurring in late adolescence. Every 'normal' adolescent is seen to experience moments of identity diffusion and moments of ego identity. As is evident in Erikson's other stages of development the positive outcome of the stage adolescence must outweigh the negative outcome if indeed growth is to



be 'healthy'.

The state of identity diffusion only becomes acute when psychological disturbances are prevalent, for example, as in the form of a role fixation or work paralysis (see Figure 1, page 12). The stage of adolescence is complete only when a dominant positive ego identity has been established. For some individuals this may never be the case. For others the crisis may be resolved but may be encountered again in later years.

### Review of Related Research on Ego Identity in Late Adolescence

Bronson's (1959) study on identity diffusion in late adolescence was among the earlier works that attempted to empirically measure Erikson's concept of the identity crisis. In keeping with Erikson's (1959) theory, Bronson worked on the premise that the state of identity diffusion would be characterized by an unstable sense of self. His sample consisted of 46 volunteer college students with the majority being women aged 19 - 22 years. In the investigation, four variables derived from clinical descriptions of identity diffusion (Erikson, 1950, 1959b) were tested: continuity with the past, degree of anxiety, certainty of self-conception, and temporal stability of self-rating. The study found that, in accord with Erikson's theory of the identity crisis, there was a positive relationship between these four variables. However, in view of the limited nature of the sample, further substantiation of these results was necessary before general support could be given to Erikson's concept of the identity crisis.

Another pioneer work (Gruen, 1960) employed a real-ideal ()-sort discrepancy measure to determine level of ego identity among 45 college students. Gruen hypothesized a relationship between ego identity and



personality integration. He predicted that individuals low in ego identity would be more likely to accept false personality sketches about themselves as personal integration of roles had not yet been achieved. Conversely, those students high in ego identity would more readily reject the false sketches because perception of their personal roles was more stable. Gruen concluded that results tentatively supported these hypotheses. He recommended further verification of the instrument as a measure of ego identity.

Another aspect of ego identity, the dimension of role variability and its curvilinear relationship to maladjustment, was central to research by Block (1961). According to Block, at one end of the dimension was excessive role variability, termed role diffusion, while at the other end, role rigidity. Block's proposition was partially upheld when he studied 41 college students: role diffusion related significantly to maladjustment but extreme role rigidity was not found to be related. Because of the homogeneous nature of the sample, college students, Block was unable to conclude on the validity of his hypothesis regarding role rigidity and maladjustment.

Howard and Kubis (1964) also explored the area of personal adjustment and its relationship to ego identity, the latter measured by a scale of 50 items on "personality dimensions relevant to ego identity" (p. 461). In their study which involved over 200 college women, a low level of ego identity was associated with a high degree of anxiety and hostility. Their findings were in keeping with Erikson's theory.

Rasmussen (1964) attempted to incorporate the measurement of the first 6 psychosocial crises as proposed by Erikson when studying the relationship between ego identity and psychosocial effectiveness. He developed a scale specifically for the assessment of ego identity that





included the assessment of resolutions of previous crises. The original participants were 1400 navy recruits with 107 selected for the final analysis. Self-acceptance and cultural and social adjustment correlated positively with ego identity.

The variable maternal identification was postulated by Dignan (1965) to affect level of ego identity achieved. In this study, the participants were over 200 female college students and their mothers. Ego identity was measured by a scale developed by Dignan covering the following areas: sense of self, uniqueness, self-acceptance, role expectation, stability, goal-directedness, and interpersonal relations. Findings supported a positive correlation between ego identity and maternal identification.

Further empirical support for Erikson's theory was cited in a longitudinal study by Constaniople (1969), which again involved a college population. Personality development was understood in terms of psychosocial stages and their respective crises. As expected, successful resolution of the identity crisis increased from freshmen to senior year.

In a later study Bach and Verdile (1975) found that Constaniople's measure of ego identity, the "Inventory of Psychosocial Development", positively correlated with Rasmussen's (1964) Ego Identity Scale. The sample included over 200 male and female high school seniors. Factor analysis of Constaniople's Inventory indicated the complexity of the ego identity construct. The researchers concluded that a single score on ego identity was not representative of the complexity of the construct.

Recently, Baker (1971) designed two instruments, a Likert-type



scale and incomplete sentence stems to measure aspects of ego identity. Both measures included the following scales: (a) Knows who he is; (b) Knows where he is going; (c) Perceives himself as having "inner sameness and continuity"; and (d) Is certain about the way his perceptions of himself compare to perceptions which others have of him. Data collected on 705 male college freshmen indicated that three of the four scales were positively correlated. The results give further support to the concept of the identity crisis.

It is apparent in these studies (Baker, 1971; Block, 1961; Bronson, 1959; Gruen, 1960; Howard and Kubis, 1964; and Rasmussen, 1964) that to define ego identity in operational terms is a difficult task. Several measures to assess ego identity, for example, by sentence stems, interviews and questionnaires have been developed. However, the efficacy of these instruments is very questionable according to their respective designers. Another limitation in these studies is that of sample selection, for almost all investigations included only the college population, and generalizations based on these results can only be made with this limitation in mind. In spite of these problems, these studies, using a variety of instruments on various populations have given evidence of the achievement of ego identity, and general support for psychosocial growth as proposed by Erikson's developmental stages.

### Marcia's Ego Identity Status

Based on Erikson's (1959a, 1964) proposition that the establishment of a positive ego identity is the central task of adolescence, Marcia (1964, 1968) developed the construct ego identity status to assess the degree of attained ego identity. The construct defines



"ways in which the identity crisis could be dealt with" (Marcia, 1968, p. 327), and serves as a measure of resolution of the identity crisis occurring in late adolescence.

Marcia outlines four identity statuses -- Identity Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Identity Diffusion. These statuses defined below, are each determined by two variables, crisis and commitment. Crisis is regarded as a period of active decision making as alternate choices are being assessed and experimentation is ongoing. Commitment is viewed as the individual's investment in a decision or "course of action". Crisis and commitment are assessed in relation to two social areas, namely occupation and ideology. The psychosocial aspect of Erikson's developmental schema is thus incorporated in Marcia's model.

Marcia suggests that the four identity statuses may be compared with an hierarchial system where the status Identity Achievement represents the highest level of the hierarchy and the status Identity Diffusion represents the lowest level. The remaining two statuses, Moratorium and Foreclosure, have not been placed in a designated position within the hierarchy other than that they lie between the highest and the lowest levels. Marcia acknowledges the need for further study relating to the personality characteristics of these two statuses in order to assign them to a more definite position within the hierarchy.

According to Marcia (1964, 1966) the status Identity Achievement is attained when the individual has experienced a crisis period and appears committed to an occupation and ideology. This status may be more easily understood in terms of Erikson's reference to "knowing"



where one is going" (1968, p. 165). A commitment is made to an occupational choice after career options and goals have been determined and assessed. In the areas of ideology, commitment is made to a philosophy of life. Commitment to an ideology is preceded by the questioning of childhood concepts, for example, religious beliefs in the conventional sense, and the resolving of these questions. The status represents the achievement of ego identity and relates to 'identity' in the psychosocial crisis identity vs. identity diffusion (Erikson, 1959a).

In the status Identity Diffusion, the identifying characteristic is lack of commitment even though the individual may have experienced a crisis period. Personal adjustment within this status varies greatly as illustrated by the 'normal' adolescent who may experience moments of identity diffusion or the disturbed adolescent who displays pathological symptoms. This status relates to 'identity diffusion' in the crisis of identity vs. identity diffusion.

Between these two outcomes, Identity Achievement and Identity Diffusion, lie the statuses of Moratorium and Foreclosure. The status Moratorium represents the crisis period where the individual is actively involved in assessing and choosing alternatives. However, commitments are still vague. Individuals in Moratorium are concerned with "issues often described as 'adolescent'" (Marcia, 1968, p. 328), such as choosing a career and sorting out queries fundamental to religious and political orientations. In the status Foreclosure, commitment is expressed although a crisis period has not been experienced. This kind of 'premature' commitment is believed to be largely influenced by parental values. It is difficult to determine where the values of the parents end and those of the adolescent begin. In other





words, parental values have not been questioned but, according to Marcia, have been accepted rather blatantly. The key issue is whether an appraisal of the parents' values or beliefs has taken place. For example, when an adolescent's value system is similar to that of his parents, assignment to Foreclosure status is not always appropriate. If the adolescent has experienced a crisis period and is still committed to parental values, he has attained Identity Achievement.

To summarize briefly: assignment to an ego identity status is determined by two criteria, crisis and commitment, in two areas, occupation and ideology. The relationship between crisis and commitment and the four ego identity statuses is summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2  
Relationship of Crisis and Commitment Among  
Identity Statuses

	Crisis Absent	Crisis
Commitment Absent	Identity Diffusion	Moratorium
Commitment	Foreclosure	Identity Achievement

Assignment to an identity status is by means of a semi-structured interview (Marcia, 1964, 1966) designed to assess the degree of crisis and commitment in the areas of occupational choice, religious beliefs, and political orientations, with the latter two areas combining to form ideology. Marcia's framework thus proposes the construct ego identity status to represent degrees of resolution of the identity



crisis.

### Related Literature on Ego Identity Status

The most extensive research on the identity crisis as proposed in Erikson's theory focusses on Marcia's construct ego identity status. Marcia (1966), in a validation study involving 86 college males investigated characteristics relating to the four identity statuses. Subjects were administered the identity status interview, a questionnaire on self-esteem, an independent measure of ego identity, a concept attainment task either under conditions designed to produce stress (evaluation apprehension and oversolicitousness) or non-stress conditions as well as a second administration of the self-esteem measurement. On the concept attainment task, the condition of "evaluation apprehension" was induced by having the experimenter suggest that performance on the task was related to intelligence; "over-solicitousness" was achieved by having the experimenter behave in an over-concerned, hovering manner during the administration. Prior to the second administration of the self esteem questionnaire, subjects were given randomly a false (positive or negative) personality sketch.

Results indicated that those individuals who had attained Identity Achievement scored highest on self-esteem and performed better on the stressful concept attainment task. Moratorium subjects resembled those in Identity Achievement except for their inconsistent performance on the concept attainment task. Foreclosure subjects exhibited authoritarian characteristics indicating their acceptance of values as obedience and respect for authority, while their level of self-esteem was found to be susceptible to negative manipulation. Those in Identity Achievement



received the highest score on the independent measure of ego identity achievement.

A further validation study with 72 male college students (Marcia (1967) supported results cited in previous research (Marcia, 1964, 1966). For example, individuals within Foreclosure status were again found to display authoritarian characteristics. An additional dimension investigated in this work was the notion that identity status may represent a continuum of maladjustment. Degree of maladjustment was assessed in terms of an anxiety measurement. Scores from the Welsh Anxiety Scale (Welsh, 1956) tended to refute this notion as did later studies (Cross and Allen, 1971; Oshman and Manosevitz, 1974).

Longitudinal studies (Waterman and Waterman, 1971; Waterman et al., 1974) explored the stability factor of the identity status. The original sample included 92 college males with 53 in attendance at final data collection. Identity status was determined by the administration of Marcia's semi-structured interview at three intervals: beginning of freshmen year, end of freshmen year and during the senior year. Regarding the stability of the statuses, the hypothesis was made that "identity achievers will be more likely to maintain their initial status than will students in other categories" (1971, p. 168). The investigators suggested that any resolution of the identity crisis occurring at the end of high school was only a tentative one, that during college years students generally showed a positive development towards Identity Achievement. Commitment was frequently made to the area of occupation before a commitment to ideology. A limitation of these studies was that data was not available for those students who withdrew from college prior to the interviews held during the senior





year.

Although several studies have indicated that there is no relationship between IQ and identity status (Marcia, 1966; Marcia and Friedman, 1970; Waterman and Waterman, 1971) Waterman and Waterman (1972) have cited evidence supporting the predictive validity of Marcia's classification system by looking at academic behavior of male college students. Academic performance, per se, did not appear to be a significant factor in the relationship between identity status and persistence in an academic career. However, assignment to identity status was significant as over twice as many individuals in Moratorium status changed their plans as compared to individuals in each of the other three statuses.

In a recent study, Waterman and Waterman (1974) tested the variable reflection-impulsivity as it related to decision processes used in coping with the identity crisis. As in previous studies, male college students (92) were selected as participants. The variable under study was considered to be of merit but its measurement was not sensitive enough to differentiate between those individuals committed and those uncommitted.

Erikson's (1964, 1968) hypothesis that social and historical factors contribute to the development of identity was studied by Waterman and Waterman (1975). They examined identity status across two generations -- sons and fathers. Results indicated that no relationship was apparent between identity status of the son and that of the respective father. Significantly fewer fathers than sons were assigned to the statuses of Moratorium and Diffusion, lending further support to Marcia's model.



The literature reviewed above has concerned itself only with ego identity status as it relates to males in late adolescence. There was a growing need to validate the construct with women. Marcia and Friedman (1970) suggested that additional criteria be included in the identity status interview when assessing the identity of women. The criteria added were attitudes toward sexual relationships as the researchers "thought that the criteria should include an issue both unique to women and crucial in identity formation" (p. 251). The uniqueness of this issue regarding only women has been questioned in later studies (Donovan, 1975a, 1975b; Schenkel and Marcia, 1972).

Marcia and Friedman's study included 49 female college seniors. In addition to the identity status interview, measurements were administered to assess the variables of self esteem, authoritarianism, anxiety, cognitive flexibility, and difficulty of college major. A summary of their findings follow: college majors chosen by those in Identity Achievement were rated as being more difficult; individuals in Foreclosure status exhibited more authoritarian qualities; individuals in Identity Diffusion displayed the highest level of anxiety. Results supported the general application of the construct to the study of identity in women. Later studies (Josselson, 1973; Schenkel and Marcia, 1972; Toder and Marcia, 1973) have contributed additional insight into the identity formation of women.

Research by Donovan (1975a, b) provides a descriptive study of personality variables associated with the different identity statuses. Participants were 13 males and 9 females enrolled in a university course "interpersonal behavior" conducted by Donovan. Interpersonal style was determined by means of audio recordings of the 39 class



sessions. Other measurements included Marcia's identity status interview, 3 projective tests (Rorschach, Thematic Apperception Test, and Early Memories Inventory), a daily log (24 hr. period) kept for one week prior to the identity status interview and a lengthy autobiography written in a prescribed form. The results indicated that identity status appears to have definite implications for the study of personality. For example, interpersonal style was found to be associated with level of ego identity. Students in Identity Diffusion appeared more withdrawn and isolate in their style. Individuals in Foreclosure were more actively involved in interpersonal relationships, however, they tended to be cautious and inhibited on occasion. Donovan suggested a fifth identity status -- Moratorium Diffusion. Its prime characteristic was illustrated by the question 'Are they drifting toward diffusion or are they hesitantly seeking moratorium?' (1975a, p. 38).

Results also indicated that identity formation in women may be different from men in that "identity achievement for women might mean the solidifying and enriching of a basically foreclosed position" (1975a, p. 42). Donovan concluded that there is a need for further longitudinal studies to clarify variables associated with stability of identity status. From a developmental perspective, a longitudinal study seems essential.

An aspect of ideology was researched by Podd (1972). He hypothesized that moral ideology was related to identity status. The sample, 142 male college students, was administered Marcia's identity status interview, a Milgram-type task to measure moral conduct, and an interview to assess level of moral judgment. The most mature level of moral judgment was displayed by those in Identity Achievement. A greater



variable in moral judgment was apparent in individuals within Moratorium status. However, behavior on the moral conduct task failed to confirm a relationship between identity status and level of moral conduct.

To further substantiate Erikson's developmental schema, evidence has been cited affirming the close relationship between resolution of the identity crisis and the subsequent crisis in the stage of young adulthood, intimacy versus isolation (Orlofsky, 1976; Orlofsky et al., 1973). Five intimacy statuses were defined in accordance with resolution of the psychosocial task in young adulthood: Intimate, Preintimate, Stereotype, Pseudointimate, and Isolate. Male university students (53) were interviewed to determine identity status and intimacy status, the latter "evaluating the presence or absence of close interpersonal relationships with peers and the extent of openness, responsibility, closeness, mutuality, and commitment in the subjects most significant relationships" (1973, p. 214). Those assigned to Identity Diffusion were found to have the least intimate relationships and appeared isolate in their interests. Individuals within the Foreclosure stage most frequently experienced stereotype relationships. Moratorium students generally resembled those in Identity Achievement having formed mature relationships predominantly in the Preintimate status. These findings appear to support Donovan's work referred to earlier.

In summary, the literature reviewed generally supports the utilization of Marcia's classification of ego identity statuses in the study of ego identity. Research findings indicate adequate justification and need for further investigation relating to Marcia's constructs. Researchers have begun to explore the relationship between ego identity





status and behavioral characteristics, for example, level of self esteem (Marcia, 1966; Marcia and Friedman, 1970) and personal adjustment (Cross and Allen, 1970; Marcia, 1966, 1967; Oshman and Manosevitz, 1974).

The intent of this thesis is to continue the empirical study of the construct ego identity status, focussing on the relationship between the level of ego identity and self perception. The following section defines this latter concept.

### Fitts' Concept of Self

A central construct essential to an examination on ego identity is the self described by Mussen as

a clear sense of ego identity ... requires a self-perceived consistency, not only at a particular moment, but also over time. ... Any developmental influences which contribute to confident self-perceptions of one's self as separate and distinct from others, as reasonably consistent and integrated in his definition of himself, and as having a continuity of the self over time, also contribute to an overall sense of ego identity. By the same token, influences which impair any of these self-perceptions foster ego diffusion.

(Mussen et al., 1969, p. 689)

For Fitts (1965, 1971, 1972), the self is the key component of the individual's perceptual field in that the perceptual field changes as the individual's concept of his self changes. His concept of self incorporates two conceptual dimensions, external and internal. The internal dimension, or those self perceptions from an internal frame of reference, involves three selves -- the Identity self, the Behavioral self, and the Judging self -- while the external dimension, or those self perceptions from an external frame of reference, involves five selves -- the Physical self, the Moral-Ethical self, the Personal



self, the Family self, and the Social self. The internal and external dimensions are closely interrelated. Fitts' positions their relationships in terms of a 5 x 3 grid yielding 15 cells as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3  
Fitts' Two Dimensional Concept of Self

		External Dimension				
		Physical Self	Moral-Ethical Self	Personal Self	Family Self	Social Self
Internal Dimension	Identity Self	11	12	13	14	15
	Judging Self	21	22	23	24	25
	Behavioral Self	31	32	33	34	35

This model was incorporated into the construction of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965), an instrument designed to empirically measure aspects of the self. There are 6 questions for each cell and each question measures both the column and the row, for example, in cell number 11, there are 6 questions that assess both the Identity Self and the Physical self.

Along the internal dimension, the Identity self or self-as-object, is formed by the individual describing himself in response to questions



such as "Who am I?" Personal growth, Fitts stated, facilitates change in the Identity self. The Behavioral self, the self-as-doer, interacts with the Identity self. The Behavioral self involves actual behavior resulting from external or internal stimuli, behavior that may or may not become a part of the Identity self. The Judging self, self-as-observer, acts as a mediator between the Identity self and the Behavioral self. In this role, the Judging self evaluates and determines behavior that is to become incorporated into the Identity self.

Fitts' external dimension includes:

the Physical self -- describing the physical characteristics and physical functioning of the individual,

the Moral-Ethical self -- describing the moral, ethical and religious views of the individual,

the Personal self -- describing the individual's sense of personal worth,

the Family self -- describing the individual's relationship with his family,

the Social self -- describing the individual's relationship with others.

The eight selves, the integration between and within them, form the basis of individual self perception.

Definition of self perception. For the purpose of this thesis, the term self perception is defined as the individual's perception of his self, this self represented by the Identity self, the Behavioral self, the Judging self, the Physical self, the Moral-Ethical self, the Personal self, the Family self, and the Social self as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale.

### Summary

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development forms the theoretical





basis of this investigation on ego identity and its relationship to self perception. Self perception is understood in terms of Fitts' concept of self that incorporates two conceptual dimensions, internal and external.

In Erikson's theory, stages of human development center on stage specific developmental tasks where each task represents a potential crisis period. The focus of this thesis is on the task identity vs. identity diffusion, relating to the 'identity crisis' in late adolescence. Erikson states that the successful resolution of the identity crisis involves the establishment of a positive identity, called ego identity.

Marcia, in an attempt to operationally define Erikson's concept of the identity crisis, proposed a classification of ego identity statuses -- Identity Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Identity Diffusion. Each status represents varying degrees of ego identity achievement. Level of ego identity is assessed by the degree of crisis and/or commitment ascertained in the areas of occupation and ideology.

In overview, early studies by Block (1961), Bronson (1959), Dignan (1965), and Gruen (1960) contribute to the validation of Erikson's principles. The literature reviewed establishes ego identity as a measurable construct. Marcia's Identity Status Interview of ego identity status has received empirical support in the research literature (Donovan, 1975a, 1975b; Waterman and Waterman, 1971, 1974). The next chapter describes the experimental procedure used in the examination of the resolution of the identity crisis and its association with self perception.



## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the design of the research and discusses the experimental conditions of this investigation. A description of the test instruments is provided as well as psychometric data supporting these choices.

#### Sample Selection

As this thesis is centered on the identity crisis and its relationship to self perception, sample selection involved those individuals in the developmental stage of adolescence. Erikson (1950, 1959b), in his writings on the identity crisis, has made reference to the college environment as being accepted by society as a psychosocial moratorium for the youth in late adolescence. The age range of late adolescence is usually between 16 - 24 years (Levita, 1965), although research studies (Donovan, 1975a, 1975b) suggest that the identity crisis may prolong into the late twenties and early thirties.

Subjects were male university students, enrolled in an introductory educational psychology course. From the 60 students who volunteered to participate in the study, 46 were interviewed for data collection. The time involved in this investigation was a practical consideration when determining the number of subjects. Related to this time factor was the decision to involve only one sex. Males were chosen primarily to provide a comparison with the results of previous research (Marcia, 1966, 1967).

The age range of the subjects was from 18 - 29 years, with a mean age of 20.7 years. The majority of the students were in their first



year of university (31 in number) while 11 were in their second year, 3 in their third year, and 1 in his fourth year. Regarding marital status, 38 were single, 6 were married, 1 was divorced, and 1 reported himself as 'living together'. The sample was somewhat diversified in their academic backgrounds as 8 students had changed faculties since enrolling at the university, 3 had previously attended another post secondary educational institution, and 3 others had had considerable work experience of at least five years duration before attending the university.

### Procedure

At an interview session, subjects were required to complete the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965), a measure of self perception. Following this, identity status was determined by a 20 - 30 minute semi-structured interview (Marcia, 1964, 1966) that assessed degree of crisis and/or commitment in the areas of occupational choice, religious beliefs, political orientations, and attitudes toward sexual relationships. Each identity status interview was recorded by audio-tape.

Instructions given at the beginning of the interview sessions were based on the Oshman and Manosevitz study (1974, p. 210).

Instructions were:

In this study we are concerned with the concept of identity. In order to explore this question with you, I am going to ask you some questions about your occupational goals, your religious beliefs, your political orientations, and your attitude towards sexual relationships. I want to assure you that neither on the tape recording nor on the written test will your full name appear. Your anonymity will be strictly preserved. Do you have any questions?



Interview sessions were held at the University of Alberta. Data collection covered an eight week period.

#### Marcia's Identity Status Interview (Marcia, 1964)

The identity status interview is a measurement on ego identity and has received considerable support from empirical study (Marcia, 1964, 1966, 1967; Toder and Marcia, 1973). It was designed to assess the areas of occupational choice, religious beliefs and political orientations with the latter two areas grouped together to form ideology. A sample question from each area is given below.

Occupational Choice: "Most parents have plans for their children, things that they would like them to go into or do. Did your parents have any plans like that?"

Religious Beliefs: "Is there any time when you've come to doubt any of your religious beliefs?"

Political Orientations: "Are there any issues that you feel fairly strongly about?"

From the interview, an assessment is made on two criteria, crisis and commitment, as experienced in the areas of occupation and ideology. Crisis, as defined earlier in Chapter II, page 18, refers to a decision making period, a turning point, where roles and alternatives are being explored and evaluated. Commitment (see Chapter II, page 18) refers to the action on decisions made. It implies an investment by the individual in the pursuit and attainment of goals.

Marcia defines four identity statuses -- Identity Achievement, Foreclosure, Moratorium and Identity Diffusion -- that represent levels of ego identity. Assignment to an identity status is dependent on the assessment of the variables crisis and commitment. The status Identity Achievement represents a commitment to an occupation and ideology and





follows the experience of a crisis period. The status represents the highest level of ego identity. Foreclosure status also represents commitment, but a crisis period has been absent. Moratorium status represents the actual crisis period, where decision making is in process allowing for the assessment of alternatives. The fourth status, Identity Diffusion, represents the lowest level of ego identity and is characterized primarily by a lack of concern for commitment.

The interview conducted in this study was a modified form, differing from the original in the inclusion of a fourth criteria, attitudes toward sexual relationships (Donovan, 1975a, 1975b; Marcia and Friedman, 1970; Schenkel and Marcia, 1972).

Administration and scoring procedure. The interviews were held in an office setting. Initial remarks gave participants an outline of the purpose and intention of the study, and subjects were invited to ask questions if they were unclear as to what was expected of them. Every effort was made by the author to establish good rapport with the participant for the interview period by helping the participant feel at ease and answering queries as these arose. The interview period was generally between 20 and 30 minutes with the interview format consistent. The semi-structured nature of the interview provided ample opportunities for clarification of response when needed. There was no deviation from the previously established sequence of questioning.

Although some of the questions, particularly those concerning attitudes towards sexual relationships were very personal, the participants did not appear reticent to respond openly to the questions. The fact that the interviewer was female while all participants were male did not appear to effect the openness with which responses were given.



However, the sex differences may be a limitation of the present study and it would be valuable to have comparisons with interviewing situations involving a male interviewer with female subjects and same sex interview and participants. This will be discussed in more detail in following chapters.

A manual (Marcia, 1964) is available for assessment of the identity status interviews. In the manual, criteria are provided for scoring each identity status. For example, the criteria for the status Moratorium are:

The individual is presently in a crisis period -- trying to make up his mind. Commitments are likely to be vague and general. An important quality here is a sense of active struggle among alternatives. (1964, p. 193)

Marcia provides descriptive sketches for each of the three areas -- occupation, religion and politics -- for each of the four identity statuses -- Identity Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Identity Diffusion -- to serve as a general reference for overall assessment. As well, specific examples are cited to illustrate each of the descriptive sketches.

Identity Achievement - Religion: Went through a period of rejecting father's religion. Period of atheism followed disillusionment with a God that would permit an evil world. Resolved by deciding that amount of good balanced evil. Is active in church and plans to raise children in it. (1964, p. 189-190)

Marcia, in the comments below, briefly summarizes the general characteristics of each status.

Identity Achievement: He seems generally able to "make it". Particularly he does not appear as if he would be overwhelmed by sudden shifts in environment or by unexpected burdens of



responsibility. He also seems to be making some solid interpersonal commitments (1964, p. 190).

**Foreclosure:** Because of his commitment and apparent self-assuredness, he appears similar to the Identity Achievement; although he may be characterized by a certain rigidity. One feels if he were placed in a situation where parental values were non-functional he would soon be greatly at a loss ... his hallmark is the notable absence of decision periods (1964, p. 193).

**Moratorium:** In some cases, there may be a denial of an internal struggle that, according to the data presented by the subjects, must be there ... Also, some subjects may show two or three different identity statuses for one of the main areas. That is, occupational choice may have elements of Identity Achievement, Moratorium and Foreclosure ... At his (the adolescent's) worst, a Moratorium is paralyzed, unable to act decisively in one way or another -- not because of a lack of commitment, but because of equal and opposite commitment (1964, p. 195).

**Identity Diffusion:** At his (the adolescent's) worst, a Diffuse exhibits the disorganized thought processes, disturbed object relations, and loosened ego boundaries associated with schizophrenia (1964, p. 198).

Each subject was assigned to an identity status in the areas of occupation and ideology, as well as an overall identity status. A separate identity status was not assigned for the area of attitudes toward sexual relationships, although this criterion was included in the final assessment of the overall identity status. Placement in the overall identity status depended on the degree of crisis and commitment assessed in occupation, ideology, and attitudes toward sexual relationships ascertained by two independent raters. A third rater was consulted when the former two raters disagreed on an assignment of the overall identity status.





In rating interviews, the scoring criteria as outlined by Marcia was adhered to as closely as possible. Marcia reports:

There are no rigid criteria for combining the three areas to yield an overall identity status. Many times the rater will get a general impression from the interview that would not strictly coincide with the sum of these three areas, these "hunches" are valuable and should not necessarily be abandoned for the sake of false rigor (1964, p. 200).

Construct validity was empirically established in studies reported earlier.

Inter-rater reliability. Previous studies employing the identity status interview indicate an inter-rater reliability between 65 - 80% is acceptable for this instrument. Table 1 summarizes data on inter-rater reliability from a number of studies that have used Marcia's interview.

Table 1  
Inter-rater Reliability on Marcia's Identity  
Status Interview

Study	No. of raters	No. of interviews	Total no. of subjects	Inter-rater reliability in percentage agreement
Marcia, 1966	3	20 random selection	86 male college students	75
Oshman and Manosevitz, 1973	3	25 random selection	73 male college students	70
Toder and Marcia, 1973	3	20 random selection	67 female college students	87
Waterman and Waterman, 1974	2	92	92 male college students	79



The procedure followed in establishing inter-rater reliability in this investigation was similar to that reported by Waterman and Waterman (1974). In the present investigation, two raters, the author and an advanced graduate student in counselling psychology, independently assessed each interview. A third rater was involved only when there was a disagreement in the initial assessment by the two raters. The third rater's academic background was also in psychology. All of the raters were familiar with the interview procedure and had some clinical experience. If the assigned identity status determined by the third rater was the same as either of the two, the interview was to be included in the analysis. All interviews were found scorable. Before rating interviews, raters became thoroughly familiar with Marcia's rating criteria. Inter-rater reliability in percentage agreement was 83.

In several studies discussed earlier that used Marcia's Identity Status Interview, raters were able to work directly with Marcia in learning the rating criteria. Although raters in this study were unable to benefit from a direct relationship with the developer, results attained appear to indicate that this is not necessary in the application of the instrument. However, this may be viewed as a limitation in the study and will be explored in a later chapter.

#### Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965)

The Tennessee Self Concept Scale, a self administered instrument, measures aspects of self-perception. It consists of 100 self-descriptive statements, for example "I have a healthy body", to which subjects respond on a 5 point scale ranging from "completely true" to "completely



false". The Tennessee Self Concept Scale has been widely used in research in the measurement of specific dimensions related to the self. A monograph series published by the Dede Wallace Center (1971, 1972) provides a comprehensive and critical evaluation of the scale.

Scoring. A manual is available for scoring. There are two methods for scoring, the Counselling Form and the more complex Clinical and Research Form. The Clinical and Research Form includes several empirical scales, for example, scales on psychosis and general mal-adjustment. This form was developed for use in clinical setting in assessments of psychological disturbances. When considering the experimental conditions and participants of this study, the Counselling Form is adequate for scoring and interpretation of results. The test variables of the Counselling Form are listed below.

1. The Self-Criticism (SC) Score reflects the level of overt defensiveness.

2. Positive (P) Scores represent levels of self esteem. The Total Positive Score measures the overall level of self esteem and is the summation of the three measures of the internal dimension: Identity, Self Satisfaction (Judging) and Behavior. The five remaining Positive Scores represent the external dimension: Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self and Social Self as shown in Figure 4.

3. Variability (V) Scores represent the variability or inconsistency of scores from one area of self perception to another. The Total Variability Score is the summation of the variability of scores from the 3 measures of the internal dimension and the variability of scores from the 5 measures of the external dimension.

4. The Distribution (D) Score reflects the distribution of



responses across the five available choices, ranging from "completely false" to "completely true".

Figure 4  
Positive (P) Scores of the Tennessee Self  
Concept Scale

		External Dimension				
		Physical Self	Moral- Ethical Self	Personal Self	Family Self	Social Self
Internal Dimension	Identity	$x_{11}$	$x_{12}$	$x_{13}$	$x_{14}$	$x_{15}$
						$\sum_{j=1}^5 x_{ij}$
	Self Satisfaction	$x_{21}$	$x_{22}$	$x_{23}$	$x_{24}$	$x_{25}$
						$\sum_{j=1}^5 x_{ij}$
	Behavior	$x_{31}$	$x_{32}$	$x_{33}$	$x_{34}$	$x_{35}$
						$\sum_{j=1}^5 x_{ij}$
		$\sum_{i=1}^3 x_{ij}$	$\sum_{i=1}^3 x_{ij}$	$\sum_{i=1}^3 x_{ij}$	$\sum_{i=1}^3 x_{ij}$	$\sum_{i=1}^3 x_{ij}$
						Total Positive $\sum_{i=1}^3 \sum_{j=1}^5 x_{ij}$

Reliability and validity. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale was standardized on a population of over 600 males and females, aged 12 - 68 years, with the norm group overrepresented by college students, white subjects, and subjects aged 12 - 30 years. Reliability coefficients ranging from .60 to .92, mean .81, were based on a test-retest over a two week period with 60 college students (Fitts, 1965, p. 14). For test





variables in the Counselling Form, the manual reports the following reliability estimates: Self Criticism (SC) .75, Total Positive (P) .92, Subscores of the Total Positive (P) .85 - .90, Total Variability (V) .67, and Distribution (D) .88.

The concept self is elusive and difficult to define and measure. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the validity of a test instrument that purports to measure aspects of the self. Research conducted on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale provides support for content validity (Fitts, 1965). Several studies (Vacchiano et al., 1968; Vacchiano and Strauss, 1968; Vincent, 1968) have investigated other areas of the scales validity.

Vacchiano and Strauss suggested 20 factors that were to account for a substantial portion of the response variance on the scale. Some support for construct validity of the external frame of reference that includes the physical self, moral-ethical self, personal self, family self and social self was evident when these factors were considered together. However, the researchers point out that there was a "failure to find clear indications ... of an internal frame of reference ... and behavior may reflect the confusion this population (college) experiences in establishing and accepting a stable identity model" (1968, p. 326).

Vincent (1968), who also focussed on the area of construct validity, examined various labels measuring personal adjustment, self worth, self-confidence or emotional stability from four instruments: the California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1957), Security-Insecurity Inventory (Maslow, 1952), 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (Cattell, 1957), and the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. Vincent found a positive



correlation in the measurement of dimensions such as personal adjustment between the scales except one, the California Psychological Inventory.

A study (Vacchiano et al., 1968) looking at personality correlates of dogmatism as measured by the Rokeach dogmatism Scale (Form E) offered tentative support for concurrent validity. Results indicated a positive relation between dogmatism and personal maladjustment and a low level of self-esteem. As in the previous studies, participants were from a college population.

Psychometric data available on this instrument provides adequate justification for use of the scale in the empirical study of self perception in late adolescence. In a review of the instrument, Suinn states: "In summary, the TSCS ranks among the better measures combining group discrimination with self concept information" (Buros, 1975, p. 586).

### Statement of Hypothesis

The general hypothesis is that differences in degree of resolution of the identity crisis as indicated by the different levels of Marcia's classification of identity status will be reflected in differences in self perception as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. More explicitly, individuals at successively higher identity status levels are expected to have significantly higher levels of self perception.

Subsumed under the general hypothesis are the following hypotheses.

If the identity crisis has been successfully resolved, meaning that a crisis period has passed and that commitment has been made to an occupational choice and ideology, the the level of ego identity is



achieved. Ego identity is associated with a high level of self esteem (Erikson, 1959a; Marcia, 1966, 1967).

Hypothesis 1: Subjects in Identity Achievement status are predicted to score higher on the Total Positive (P) Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than subjects in other status levels.

Hypothesis 2: Subscores within the Total Positive (P) Score for those in Identity Achievement are predicted to be more homogenous and higher than those for subjects in other categories.

If the identity crisis is indeed 'in process', where alternatives and choices are presently being assessed and re-evaluated, then internal confusion and preoccupation with "adolescent" matters are characteristic of this state (Constaniople, 1969; Erikson, 1959a, Mussen et al, 1969; Waterman and Waterman, 1971).

Hypothesis 3: Subjects in Moratorium status are predicted to score higher on the Total Variability (V) Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than subjects in either Identity Achievement or Foreclosure.

Hypothesis 4: Subjects in Moratorium status are predicted to obtain lower Distribution (D) Scores than those subjects in either Identity Achievement or Foreclosure indicating a degree of uncertainty in self perception.

If in the resolution of the identity crisis, commitment to an occupation and ideology has been largely influenced by parents or parental surrogates, then characteristics of rigidity and authoritarianism are apparent as well as a high degree of self acceptance (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966, 1967; Marcia and Friedman, 1970; Orlofsky et al., 1973).

Hypothesis 5: Subjects in Foreclosure status are predicted to score higher on the Total Positive (P) Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale





than subjects in either Identity Diffusion or Moratorium.

Hypothesis 6: Subjects in Foreclosure status are predicted to score higher on the Distribution (D) Score than subjects in other categories.

If resolution of the identity crisis is neither of importance nor of concern and commitment to an occupation and ideology is lacking, a crisis period being immaterial, then the level of ego identity is low (Block, 1960; Bronson, 1959; Erikson, 1959a; Marcia, 1966).

Hypothesis 7: Subjects in Identity Diffusion status are predicted to score lower on the Distribution (D) Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than subjects in other categories.

Hypothesis 8: The Total Positive (P) Scores for those in Identity Diffusion are predicted to be lower than subjects in other status levels.

### Statistical Design

The data collected was analyzed by a One-Way Analysis of Variance. Results from this analysis are discussed in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

For the 46 subjects who participated in this study, the most frequent ego identity status was Identity Achievement (N=22) while the number of subjects in the remaining three statuses were lower and varied: Moratorium (N=17), Foreclosure (N=1), and Identity Diffusion (N=6). Table 2 summarizes the relationship between identity status and year of university and marital status.

From the data presented in Table 2, it is apparent that all married students were in the status Identity Achievement, where 3 were in their first year, 2 in their second year, and 1 in his fourth year. Of this group, 3 of the subjects had been involved in previous work experience for at least a 5 year period. As an outcome of Erikson's developmental task, commitment is made to an intimate relationship, such as in marriage, after commitment has been made in the areas of occupation and ideology. Thus the findings appear to support resolutions, discussed by Orlofsky (1976) in an earlier section, of the crises of adolescence and young adulthood, identity vs. identity diffusion and intimacy vs. isolation, respectively.

Although more first year subjects (N=14) than second year (N=6) or third and fourth year subjects (N=2) were assigned to Identity Achievement, there was a larger percentage of second, third, and fourth year subjects in this category. These results lend support to results achieved by other researchers (Waterman and Waterman, 1971; Waterman et al., 1974) who have shown that there is a positive development during college years towards Identity Achievement. In accordance with this trend towards Identity



Table 2  
Identity Status, Year of University and Marital Status

	Identity Status								
	Identity Achievement (N=22)		Moratorium (N=17)		Foreclosure (N=1)		Identity Diffusion (N=6)		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Total N
Year of University									
1st	14	45	13	41	1	3	3	9	31
2nd	6	54	3	27	-	-	2	18	11
3rd & 4th	2	50	1	25	-	-	1	25	4
Marital Status									
Single	15	39	16	42	1	3	6	16	38
Married	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Other	1	50	1	50	-	-	-	-	2



Achievement, the greatest percentage of students in Moratorium were in their first year of University as compared to subsequent years.

The majority of subjects were single, first year students most frequently in the statuses Identity Achievement and Moratorium. A more equal distribution of subjects among the four identity statuses and/or a greater number of subjects would seem desirable for generalization of results. The limited nature of the sample will be further explored in a later section.

Analysis of the data involved two computations. The first analysis involved a Pearson Product Moment Correlation matrix between the test variables measured on the Counselling Form of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. The second analysis involved One-Way Analysis of Variance for unequal samples for each score on the self perception measure.

#### Correlation Between Variables on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale

The scoring procedure for the Total Positive Score is the most complex of the four major scores (Self Criticism, Total Positive, Total Variability, Distribution) of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. Table 3 reports the correlations, t-values and probabilities between the 5 external measures and the 3 internal measures of the self and the Total Positive Score providing additional information regarding the relationship between the variables measuring aspects of the self. As well, correlations are provided for the cells ( $X_{11}$ - $X_{35}$ ) that form the bases of the eight dimensions of the self and the Total Positive Score.

As illustrated in Table 3, there were positive correlations between all eight dimensions of the self and the Total Positive Score: Identity, Self Satisfaction, Behavior, Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal





Self, Family Self, and Social Self. All dimensions except one, Physical Self, were significantly correlated with the Total Positive Score at the .005 level while the Physical Self was significant at the .01 level.

When the items of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale were initially sorted, the 3 internal dimensions were identified and when summed, provided the Total Positive Score. Further investigation of the items (Fitts, 1965) resulted in the two-dimensional concept and the 5 external dimensions. The Total Positive Score can also be arrived at by the summation of the 5 external dimensions although Fitts does not define it in this manner. Thus each item on the scale contributes to both the internal and external dimensions and a positive correlation between the eight dimensions of the self is expected.

Further analysis reveals that greater than half of the cells, for example, cells  $X_{13}$ ,  $X_{14}$ ,  $X_{24}$ ,  $X_{34}$  correlated significantly with the Total Positive Score. In support of Fitts' model, correlations were higher with the sums of the columns and rows, meaning the external and internal dimensions, and the Total Positive Score than with the individuals cells and the Total Positive Score. No negative correlations were reported. Generally, these results indicated a positive relationship between the eight dimensions of self perception as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale.



Table 3

Correlations, t-values, and Probabilities Between the 5 External Dimensions and the 3 Internal Dimensions of the Self and the Total Positive Score;  
In Cells  $X_{11}$ - $X_{35}$  Correlations, t-values and Probabilities  
Between These Dimensions and the Total Positive Score

Internal Dimensions of Self	External Dimensions of Self					Correlation of Sum of Each Row With Total P
	Physical Self	Moral-Ethical Self	Personal Self	Family Self	Social Self	
Identity	$X_{11}$ $r = 0.15$ $t = 1.03$ $p = .31$	$X_{12}$ $r = .34$ $t = 2.42^{**}$ $p = .02$	$X_{13}$ $r = .43$ $t = 3.14^{***}$ $p = .003$	$X_{14}$ $r = .52$ $t = 4.05^{***}$ $p = 0.000$	$X_{15}$ $r = .25$ $t = 1.68$ $p = .10$	$r = .80$ $t = 8.87^{***}$ $p = .00$
Self Satisfaction	$X_{21}$ $r = .16$ $t = 1.09$ $p = .28$	$X_{22}$ $r = .15$ $t = 1.03$ $p = .31$	$X_{23}$ $r = .34$ $t = 2.43^{*}$ $p = .02$	$X_{24}$ $r = .38$ $t = 2.73^{**}$ $p = .009$	$X_{25}$ $r = .32$ $t = 2.24^{*}$ $p = .03$	$r = .63$ $t = 5.33^{***}$ $p = .00$
Behavior	$X_{31}$ $r = .34$ $t = 2.40^{**}$ $p = .02$	$X_{32}$ $r = .36$ $t = 2.60^{**}$ $p = .01$	$X_{33}$ $r = .37$ $t = 2.61^{**}$ $p = .01$	$X_{34}$ $r = .32$ $t = 2.25^{*}$ $p = .03$	$X_{35}$ $r = .25$ $t = 1.68$ $p = .10$	$r = .67$ $t = 5.92^{***}$ $p = .00$
Correlation of Sum of Each Column with Total P	$r = .37$ $t = 2.66^{**}$ $p = .01$	$r = .48$ $t = 3.67^{***}$ $p = .00$	$r = .62$ $t = 5.26^{***}$ $p = .00$	$r = .66$ $t = 5.88^{***}$ $p = .00$	$r = .54$ $t = 4.24^{***}$ $p = .00$	Total Positive

d.f. = 44

\* $p > 0.05$ \*\* $p > 0.01$ \*\*\* $p > 0.005$



### Group Differences

Table 4 presents a summary of the means, variances and standard deviations on test scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale for the total group. Table 5 shows the means and standard deviations on test scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale for three identity statuses: Identity Achievement, Moratorium, and Identity Diffusion. These values are not reported for the status of Foreclosure as only one subject was assigned to that group. The mean values and standard deviations have been plotted into profiles (see Figures 5-7) while the means for all groups have been plotted for comparison into a common profile (see Figure 8).





Table 4

Means, Variances and Standard Deviations on Test Scores on the  
Tennessee Self Concept Scale for the Total Group: Identity Achievement,  
Moratorium, Identity Diffusion, and Foreclosure

Test Variable		Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation
Internal	Self Criticism	28.96	10.91	3.30
	Positive Scores			
	Total Positive	272.24	117.22	10.83
	Identity	88.89	28.66	5.35
	Self Satisfaction Behavior	90.20 93.15	20.72 31.87	4.44 5.65
External	Physical Self	59.63	10.06	3.17
	Moral-Ethical Self	43.13	17.42	4.17
	Personal Self	57.52	23.60	4.86
	Family Self	53.11	19.31	4.40
	Social Self	58.85	9.91	3.15
Variability Scores				
Total		49.72	135.38	11.59
Sum of external		25.74	47.02	6.86
Sum of internal		24.83	44.54	6.67
Distribution		108.07	658.32	25.66

N = 46



Table 5

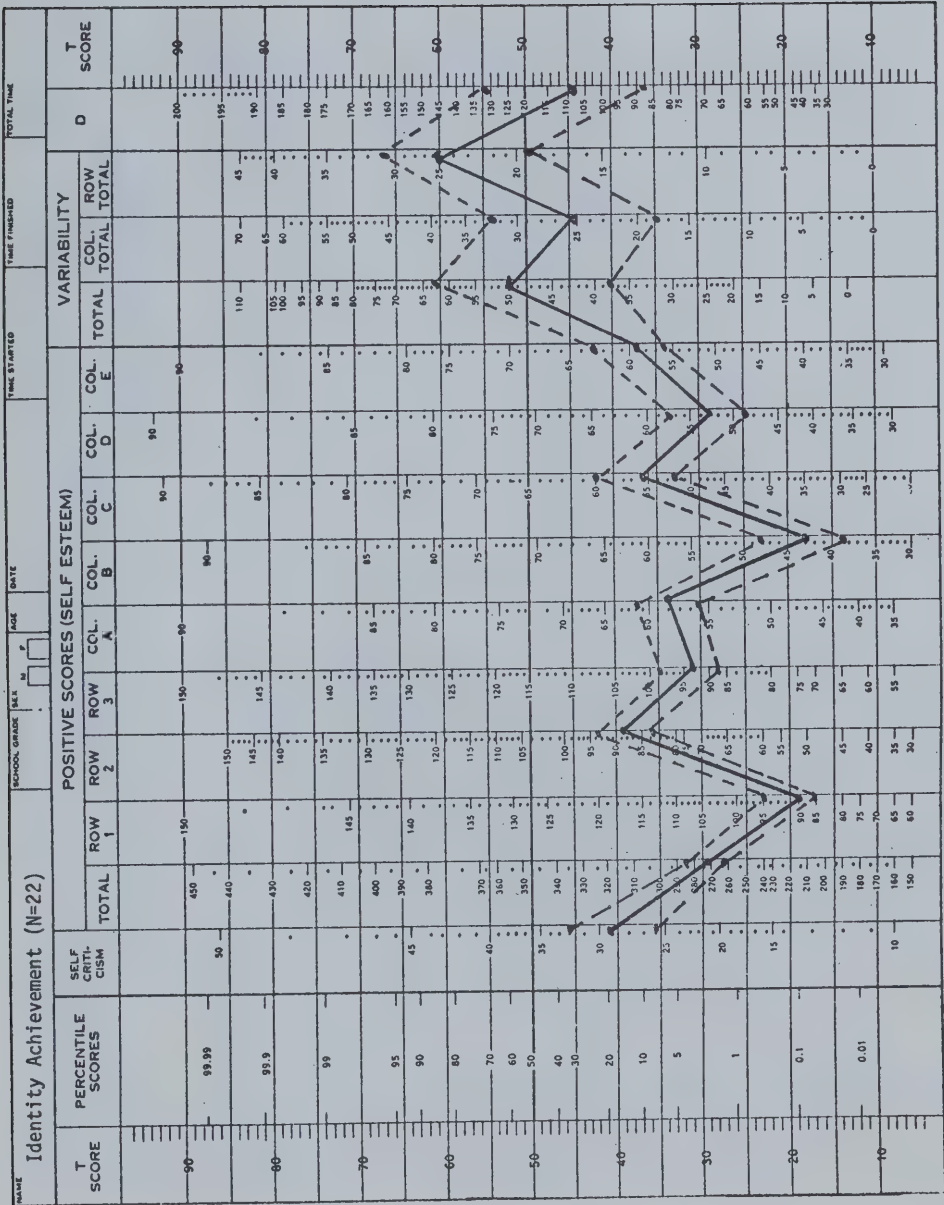
Means and Standard Deviations on Test Scores on the Tennessee  
Self Concept Scale for Identity Statuses

Test Variable	Identity Achievement (N=22)		Moratorium (N=17)		Identity Diffusion (N=6)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self Criticism	29.09	2.76	28.88	4.11	28.50	3.73
Positive Scores						
Total Positive	272.18	10.55	270.94	9.61	278.17	15.44
Identity	90.05	4.71	87.24	4.79	91.67	5.86
Self Satisfaction	89.09	4.75	90.76	3.42	92.83	5.85
Behavior	93.05	5.83	92.94	6.03	93.67	5.68
Physical Self	59.41	3.91	59.47	3.57	60.67	2.66
Moral-Ethical Self	43.32	4.44	43.29	4.29	42.50	3.94
Personal Self	56.45	3.91	58.00	5.04	62.00	3.90
Family Self	53.45	4.41	52.24	4.41	53.33	4.89
Social Self	59.55	3.32	57.94	2.70	59.67	3.33
Variability Scores						
Total	50.82	12.07	47.17	12.14	51.17	10.07
Sum of external	25.32	7.47	26.24	7.15	25.00	5.18
Sum of internal	25.50	5.79	23.06	8.30	26.67	5.32
Distribution	109.82	21.92	100.88	31.87	121.00	19.77

Internal

External





$\bar{X}$  ——— 29.1 272.2 90.1 89.1 93.1 59.4 43.3 56.5 53.5 59.6 50.8 25.3 25.5 109.8  
S.D. - - - 2.8 10.6 4.7 4.8 5.8 3.2 4.4 3.9 4.4 3.3 12.1 7.5 5.8 21.9

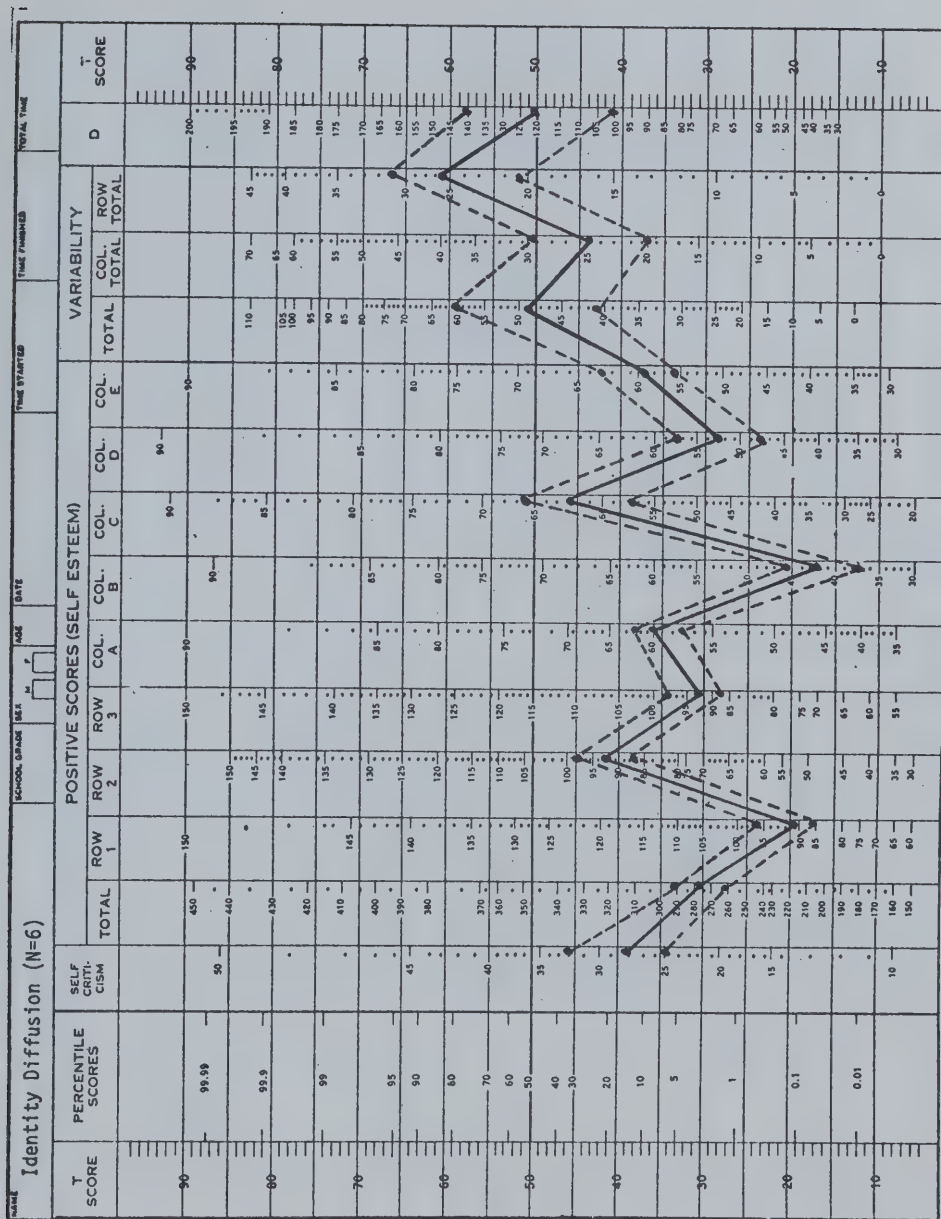
Figure 5  
Mean Profile on Test Scores for Identity Achievement Status









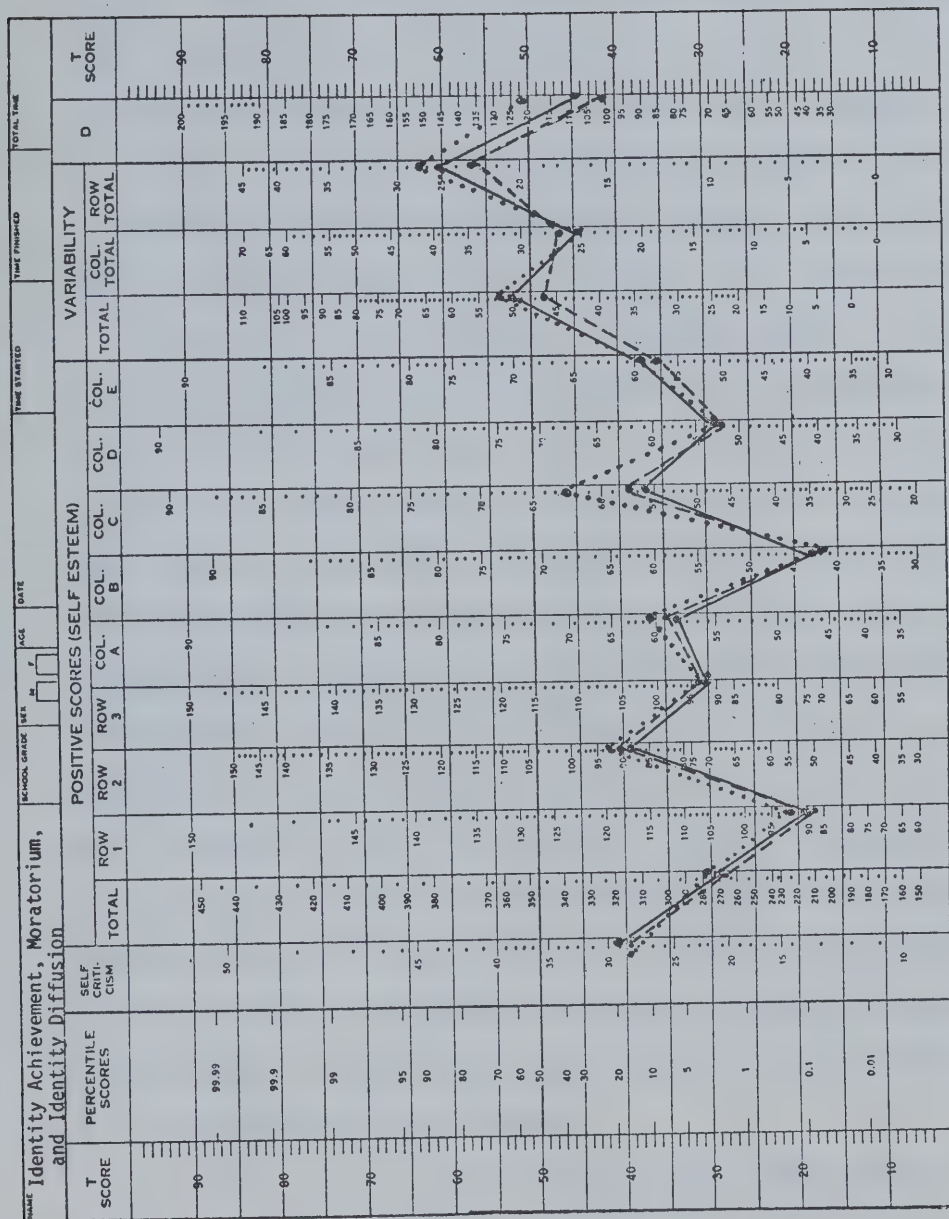


$\bar{X}$  \_\_\_\_\_ 28.5 278.2 91.7 92.8 93.7 60.7 42.5 62.0 53.3 59.7 51.2 25.0 26.7 121.0  
 S.D. ——— 3.7 15.4 5.9 5.9 5.7 2.7 3.9 3.9 4.9 3.3 10.1 5.2 5.3 19.8

Figure 7

Mean Profile on Test Scores for Identity Diffusion Status





Identity Achievement ——— 29.1 272.2 90.1 89.1 93.1 59.4 43.3 56.5 53.5 59.6 50.8 25.3 25.5 109.8  
 Moratorium - - - - - 28.9 270.9 87.2 90.7 92.9 59.5 43.3 58.0 52.2 57.9 47.2 26.2 23.1 100.9  
 Identity Diffusion . . . . . 28.5 278.2 91.7 92.8 93.7 60.7 42.5 62.0 53.3 59.7 51.2 25.0 26.7 121.0

Figure 8  
 Mean Profile on Test Scores for the Identity Statuses:  
 Identity Achievement, Moratorium, and Identity Diffusion



As illustrated by the profiles in Figure 8, few large differences between the mean raw scores for the three identity status groups are apparent. The mean values for these statuses (Identity Achievement, Moratorium, and Identity Diffusion) on each of the test variables of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale were subjected to a One-Way Analysis of Variance. The results from this analysis are reported in Table 6. A significant difference was obtained on the test variable Personal Self, an external dimension of the self (d.f. 2,42,  $F=3.82$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

To identify group differences, all possible comparisons between scores and identity statuses were computed using the Newman-Keuls test for critical differences between means. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 7 where it is indicated that the only means between which there is a significant difference is between Identity Achievement and Identity Diffusion on the variable Personal Self. However, from the graphs plotted in Figure 8 it is observed that the higher mean value was obtained in the status Identity Diffusion ( $\bar{X} = 62.00$ ) and not in the expected status Identity Achievement ( $\bar{X} = 56.45$ ). This finding contradicts hypotheses 2 and 8 stated earlier. Hypothesis 2 predicted high Positive Scores, of which the test variable Personal Self is one, for those individuals who have achieved a high level of ego identity as in the status Identity Achievement. Conversely, hypothesis 8 predicted low Positive scores for those individuals whose level of ego identity is low, as in the status Identity Diffusion.

A number of factors may have contributed to this unexpected outcome. For instance, a review of the raw scores of the test variables on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale indicated that the highest Total Positive Score (308) and the highest score on the dimension Personal Self (69) was





attained by a subject in Identity Diffusion. It may be that a greater number of subjects in this group (N=6) would have limited the significance of these higher scores. Distribution of subjects would then be more equal among the three identity status groups with results more comparable. Also, it is important to note that all Positive Scores (see Table 5; Figure 8) are relatively low and even though the dimension Personal Self was found to be significantly higher in Identity Diffusion as compared to Identity Achievement, the score was still relatively low. The range of scores reported on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale will be further discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to the specific hypotheses formulated and tested.



Table 6  
Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance on Scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale  
for Identity Statuses: Identity Achievement, Moratorium, and Identity Diffusion

Test Variable	Scores of Variance	Mean Squares	Degrees of Freedom	F ratio	Probability
Self Criticism	Between 1.71 Within 499.0	0.86 11.88	2 42	0.07	0.93
Positive Scores Total Positive	Between 235.0 Within 5005.0	117.50 119.17	2 42	0.99	0.38
Identity	Between 117.81 Within 1003.4	58.91 23.89	2 42	2.47	0.10
Self Satisfaction	Between 74.0 Within 831.8	37.00 19.81	2 42	1.87	0.17
Behavior	Between 2.50 Within 1455.3	1.25 34.65	2 42	0.04	0.96
Physical Self	Between 7.8 Within 453.0	3.91 10.79	2 42	0.36	0.70
Moral-Ethical Self	Between 3.43 Within 787.8	1.72 18.76	2 42	0.09	0.91
Personal Self	Between 146.3 Within 803.5	73.16 19.13	2 42	3.82*	0.03
Family Self	Between 15.0 Within 837.9	7.53 19.95	2 42	0.38	0.69
Social Self	Between 28.0 Within 403.8	14.03 9.62	2 42	1.46	0.24
Variability Scores Total	Between 145.6 Within 5326.6	73.31 141.11	2 42	0.52	0.60
Sum of External	Between 10.7 Within 2123.8	5.37 50.57	2 42	0.17	0.90
Sum of Internal	Between 83.0 Within 1947.7	41.51 46.38	2 42	0.90	0.42
Distribution	Between 1947.7 Within 28299.1	973.88 673.79	2 42	1.45	0.25

\* $p < 0.05$



Table 7

Summary of Newman-Keuls Comparison for Identity Statuses  
on Tennessee Self Concept Scale Scores

		Mean Differences Between Identity Statuses			
	Test Variable	Identity Achievement- Moratorium	Moratorium- Identity Diffusion	Identity Achievement- Identity Diffusion	
	Self Criticism	0.21	0.38		0.59
	Positive Scores Total	1.24	7.23		5.99
Internal	Identity	2.81	4.43		1.62
	Self Satisfaction	1.67	2.07		3.74
	Behavior	0.10	0.73		0.62
External	Physical Self	0.06	1.20		1.26
	Moral-Ethical Self	0.02	0.79		0.82
	Personal Self	1.55	4.00		5.55*
	Family Self	1.22	1.10		0.12
	Social Self	1.60	1.73		0.12
	Variability Scores Total	3.64	3.99		0.35
	Column Total	0.92	1.24		0.32
	Row Total	2.44	3.61		1.17
	Distribution	8.94	20.12		11.19

\* $p < 0.05$



**Table 8**  
**Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance on Cell Scores of the Positive Scores**  
**on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale for Identity Statuses:**  
**Identity Achievement, Moratorium and Identity Diffusion**

	External Dimension			
	Physical Self	Moral-Ethical Self	Personal Self	Family Self
Identity	$X_{11}$	$X_{12}$	$X_{13}$	$X_{14}$
	Sources of variance			
	Between	7.67	67.5	$X_{15}$
	Within	215.3	264.1	13.5
	Mean Squares	3.84	33.79	192.4
Degrees of Freedom		5.13	6.29	7.38
		2.42	2.42	7.95
	F ratio	0.75	5.37**	2.42
	Probability	0.48	0.008	0.93
Self Satisfaction	$X_{21}$	$X_{22}$	$X_{23}$	$X_{24}$
	Sources of variance			
	Between	1.49	34.2	$X_{25}$
	Within	163.3	180.9	6.9
	Mean Squares	0.75	17.14	173.8
Degrees of Freedom		3.89	4.31	3.46
		2.42	2.42	4.14
	F ratio	0.19	3.98*	2.42
	Probability	0.83	0.03	0.84
Behavior	$X_{31}$	$X_{32}$	$X_{33}$	$X_{34}$
	Sources of variance			
	Between	3.81	0.98	$X_{35}$
	Within	310.7	292.9	0.93
	Mean Squares	1.91	0.49	208.3
Degrees of Freedom		7.40	6.97	0.47
		2.42	2.42	4.96
	F ratio	0.26	0.07	2.42
	Probability	0.77	0.93	0.09

\* $p < 0.05$

\*\* $p < 0.01$





Further investigation reported in Table 8 identified scores from cell numbers 13 and 23 that contributed to the significant differences in the external dimension Personal Self. In cell 13, the difference between statuses was significant at the 0.01 level (d.f. 2,42,  $F = 5.37$ ) while in cell 23, significance was lower, at the 0.05 level (d.f. 2,42,  $F = 3.98$ ). Mean scores for these two cells were also subjected to a Newman-Keuls comparison to determine group differences. Differences were found between Identity Diffusion and Identity Achievement. The mean value for Identity Diffusion in cell number 13 was 23.33 as compared to 19.63 for Identity Achievement. For cell number 23, the mean value for Identity Diffusion was 20.17 and 17.86 for Identity Achievement. This difference is in the same direction, higher values for the status Identity Diffusion, as stated for the dimension Personal Self. These findings support results shown in Table 6 and 7.

### Summary

Regarding the measurement on self perception, the three measures of the internal dimension (Identity, Self Satisfaction, and Behavior) and the five measures of the external dimension (Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self, and Social Self) were found to correlate positively with the Total Positive Score on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. Results tended to support a positive relationship between these dimensions.

Analysis of variance on mean test scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale was designed to show if there was a significant difference between the various identity statuses on any of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale's variables.

The only difference found was on the dimension Personal Self, showing



a significant difference between Identity Achievement and Identity Diffusion. However, this difference was in an unexpected direction, as the higher mean value was attained in the status Identity Diffusion.

The next chapter discusses the hypotheses tested relating to the four identity statuses as outcomes of the identity crisis and explores the implications of the results.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS

#### Summary

This study was intended to examine the relationship between the identity crisis and self perception and, more specifically, to determine what aspects of the self are associated with outcomes of the identity crisis. The theoretical bases for the concept of the identity crisis was found in the writings of Erik Erikson who stressed the importance of the stage of adolescence, particularly late adolescence, in the development of an integrated, continuous, and healthy identity. This positive identity is termed ego identity.

Recent studies (Baker, 1971; Block, 1961; Howard and Kubis, 1964; Rasmussen, 1964) have investigated the efficacy of several measurements on ego identity but a review of their findings indicated that the concept was indeed difficult to operationalize. Marcia, who developed a semi-structured interview that purports to differentiate outcomes of the identity crisis, suggested four identity statuses that distinguish degrees of resolution of the identity crisis. The criteria for the identity statuses were the degree of crisis and commitment in the areas of occupation and ideology. For this investigation, Marcia's Identity Status Interview was chosen for the assessment of the identity crisis.

During the identity crisis the self is restructured and redefined and, according to Erikson, successful resolution of the identity crisis is marked by an increase in self esteem. Perception of the self, then, appears central to the study of identity formation. The rationale for this has been stated earlier (Chapter II, p. 27) namely, that:





a clear sense of ego identity...requires a self-perceived consistency not only at a particular moment, but also over time .... Any developmental influences which contribute to confident self-perceptions of one's self as separate and distinct from others, as reasonably consistent and integrated in his definition of himself, and as having a continuity of the self over time, also contribute to an overall sense of ego identity. By the same token, influences which impair any of these self-perceptions foster ego diffusion.  
(Mussen et al., 1969, p. 689)

Fitts' two dimensional concept of self as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale was the instrument used to measure self perception.

For this study, the sample included 46 male undergraduate students. Each subject was interviewed to determine identity status and required to complete the same paper and pencil test on self perception.

The general hypothesis generated was that degrees of resolution of the identity crisis would be reflected in significant differences in self perception between individuals at different levels of identity statuses. In comparison of the identity status in mean test scores of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, no significant differences were revealed except for one, the Personal Self. The general hypothesis as stated was not supported in the present study. Discussion of this finding and the specific hypotheses formulated and tested for this investigation follows.

### Conclusions and Discussion

Hypotheses 1 and 2 (below) were not confirmed by the analysis of data. As shown in Table 5 (p.52) and Figure 8 (p.56) the Total Positive Score for the Identity Achievement status was not significantly higher than other statuses. The profile of mean Positive Scores (see Figure 5, p.52) indicated that scores were relatively low and heterogenous. This study failed to confirm Erikson's theoretical formulation that the achievement of ego



identity is associated with a high level of self esteem. No significant relationship was found between the Identity Achievement status, representing a high level of ego identity, as defined by Marcia and self esteem as measured by the Positive Scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale.

Hypothesis 1: Subjects in Identity Achievement status are predicted to score higher on the Total Positive (P) Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than subjects in other status levels.

Hypothesis 2: Subscores within the Total Positive (P) Score for those in Identity Achievement are predicted to be more homogenous and higher than those for subjects in other categories.

Findings (see Table 5, p.52; Figure 8, p.56) indicated a similarity between statuses for Variability (V) Scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. Results did show a trend towards a lower Distribution (D) Score, although the differences between identity statuses were not significant. An uncertain self perception, characteristic of the adolescent in Moratorium, would be supported by a lower Distribution (D) Score.

Hypothesis 3: Subjects in Moratorium status are predicted to score higher on the Total Variability Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than subjects in either Identity Achievement or Foreclosure.

Hypothesis 4: Subjects in Moratorium status are predicted to obtain lower Distribution (D) Scores than those subjects in either Identity Achievement or Foreclosure indicating a degree of uncertainty in self perception.

No conclusions were drawn regarding hypotheses 5 and 6 as there was not sufficient data for the status Foreclosure to be included in the statistical analysis.

Hypothesis 5: Subjects in Foreclosure status are predicted to score higher on the Total Positive (P)



(P) Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than subjects in either Identity Diffusion or Moratorium.

Hypothesis 6: Subjects in Foreclosure are predicted to score higher on the Distribution (D) Score than subjects in other categories.

Findings did not confirm hypothesis 7 that tested significant differences of mean scores on the Distribution (D) Score for Identity Diffusion.

Regarding hypothesis 8, the Total Positive Scores for Identity Diffusion were not found to be significantly lower than scores in Identity Achievement or Moratorium. Analysis of all Positive Scores revealed an unexpected difference; scores on the variable Personal Self were found to be significantly higher in the status Identity Diffusion when compared to Identity Achievement (see Figure 8). However, all Positive Scores for the status Identity Diffusion were relatively low even when the significant difference in Personal Self was considered. These relatively low scores seem to uphold Marcia's description of the status Identity Diffusion characteristically represented by a low level of ego identity. A low level of self esteem is indicated by low Positive Scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale.

Hypothesis 7: Subjects in Identity Diffusion status are predicted to score lower on the Distribution (D) Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than subjects in other categories.

Hypothesis 8: The Total Positive (P) Scores for those in Identity Diffusion are predicted to be lower than subjects in other status levels.

Conclusions based on the data of this research do not support a significant relationship between outcomes of the identity crisis and self perception. As discussed earlier (see Chapter II), a review of the



literature on ego identity in late adolescence revealed that this concept was theoretically complex and difficult to measure. Similarly, to provide an adequate measure for self perception is not an easy task. Even though the data in this investigation does not bear out the general hypothesis formulated, that differences in degree of resolution of the identity crisis will be reflected in differences in self perception, this hypothesis cannot simply be abandoned without further study. The complexity of both psychological issues, the identity crisis and self perception, and the centrality of these issues in the study of individual psychology necessitates further exploration to substantiate any conclusions drawn.

#### Limitations of the Study

In view of the research methodology used in this study, several factors may be regarded as limitations and should be considered at this time. The volunteer nature of the sample may have placed restrictions on the representativeness of the sample. Rosenthal (1965), who has worked extensively in the area of experimenter effects, has suggested personality differences between volunteer subjects and non-volunteers. Volunteer subjects, for example, tended to be more intellectual, more unconventional, and more sociable. The use of college students in research has been the topic of several discussions and criticized by such psychologists as Schultz (1969) who argues that the college population is a restricted sample and thus limits the conclusiveness of results. On the other hand, Oakes (1972) has expressed another view point:

No matter what population a researcher samples, whether it be psychology students, real-people volunteers, public school students, or whatever, there are probably some behavioral phenomena that would be manifested differently in that population due to an interaction effect of the particular characteristics of that subject population ... the generalizability of the





results of behavioral research is not a function of the population sampled, but ... depends on the interaction of subject characteristics and the particular behavioral phenomena with which one is concerned.

(1972, p. 962)

A further limitation arises from the use of the semi-structured interview in determining identity status. Scoring criteria as outlined by Marcia (1964) were occasionally vague, for example, "there are no rigid criteria for combining the three areas (occupation, religion, and politics) to yield an overall identity status" (p. 200). From the review of previous research that has used Marcia's interview, it was apparent that in some instances analysis of data was based on the overall identity status while in other cases analysis was based on combinations of identity status in the three areas assessed as well as the overall identity status. Consistency in scoring procedures seems essential if research findings are to be comparable. Further refinement of scoring criteria for each of the four identity statuses may be desirable to increase discriminatory power of the classification system proposed by Marcia. This recommendation at first glance may appear to contradict the purpose of the semi-structured interview, that is, to allow the interviewer a degree of flexibility in exploring issues with the interviewee. If scoring criteria become too rigid, exploration may be neither desirable nor necessary and the interview likely will move to a structured format.

The interview format is also subject to limitations. There are distinct advantages, however, to using this technique for data gathering. Its obvious strength is that it allows for the acquisition of a large amount of information. In addition, the semi-structured interview, because of its flexible nature, permits the probing of responses.



Information regarding controversial issues such as political and religious orientations covered in Marcia's Identity Status Interview may be gained through appropriate questioning. On the other hand, some respondents may appear reticent in answering questions on such sensitive issues in this open and direct situation.

As Kerlinger (1964) points out, the greatest limitation of this technique is that it is time consuming and costly. This time factor usually restricts the number sampled and scoring of the interview involves additional time. In the present study where interviews were recorded, each interview was analyzed to at least twice.

A number of other limitations should be noted. Newcomb et al (1966) suggest that the interviewer's response to statements given by the respondent may affect later statements given. The interviewer's personal attitudes, if related to the respondent, may bias the outcome of the interview. According to these researchers, the interviewer's expectations of the results may also cause the interviewer to misinterpret replies on later questions because of perceptions based on earlier replies. However, the rater reliability (83% agreement) reported in Chapter III indicates that these factors did not play a significant role in this study.

Lastly, it is interesting to note that a study on the self perception measure, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, cited earlier in Chapter III by Vacchiano and Strauss (1968) indicated that the college population experienced difficulty in "establishing and accepting a stable identity" (p. 326). The researchers were unable to isolate a factor responsible for the internal dimension of the scale. One may question whether the instruments used in the present study were sufficiently sensitive to measure



such concepts as ego identity and dimensions of the self.

### Recommendations and Implications for Further Research

A necessary requirement for subsequent research efforts in examining developmental processes such as identity formation is the design of longitudinal studies. The implications of longitudinal research for education in general and the counselling process in particular might include some of the following benefits. Such research may more precisely define the boundaries of adolescence and its psychological dimensions. Measures that are able to establish the rate, level, and state of change in personality variables would have obvious benefits in counselling. The counsellor, trained in the administration of a battery of tests, would have access to a valuable tool that would help the individual to acquire a greater understanding of his self and to evaluate more effectively educational and vocational choices.

A more heterogeneous sample, from a variety of situations and including both sexes, is desirable. This sample may include individuals from a number of groups, for example, the unemployed, the professionally trained, white and blue collar groups. Although the sample of the present study was limited because it was drawn only from the college population, other research on Marcia's Identity Status Interview have used samples drawn from similar populations. For generalizability of results, a more heterogeneous sample is recommended.

Also, there is an apparent need for further development of test instruments that are designed to measure such psychological constructs as the self and ego identity. Further refinement of test instruments will ensure results that are both valid and reliable.





Studies such as the one outlined in this thesis serve to illustrate the complexity and relative vagueness of the concepts involved in studies on self perception and the establishment of a sense of identity. In addition, the studies serve to indicate the work that has yet to be done to establish these constructs as empirically measurable and definable, able to take their place alongside some of psychology's more accepted concepts.



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